Expansion of communication network in remote, rural and tribal areas

1674. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether several areas in the country through technically feasibility have not been provided with telecommunications facilities till date;

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and;

(c) the steps taken by Government to strengthen upgrade and expand communication networks in the remote, rural and tribal areas of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir, BSNL provides telecom facilities wherever it is technically feasible.

(b) Does Not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Steps taken by BSNL to strengthen, upgrade and expand communication networks in the remote, rural and tribal areas in the country are as follows:

(i) BSNL has relaxed norms for laying of underground cable from 2.5 Kms. to 5.0 Kms. from the nearest telephone exchange for provision of new telephone connections where such demands exist.

(ii) To provide telephone connections in these areas economically, BSNL has deployed a large WLL network throughout its service areas and also planned to cover all the SDCAs (Short Distance Charging Areas) by WLL network.

(iii) Under the plan of umbrella coverage, BSNL has planned to have three WLL BTSs per SDCA to facilitate for provision of telephone connections almost on demand in remote rural areas including Tribal Areas in the country.

(iv) BSNL has planned to cover all villages in the country having population more than 5000 by its cellular mobile service. BSNL is also deploying cellular mobile network in the all National and State Highways,

Railway Routes and Pilgrim Centers to provide incidental coverage of mobile service to the near by villages.

(v) In remote and far-flung areas, which are not possible to be covered with terrestrial technology, VPTs are planned to be provided on Digital Satellite Phone Terminals (DSPTs).

(vi) Replacement of MARR VPTs with reliable technology (WILL/ Landline).

(vii) Conversion of the small exchanges like 256 P C-DOT and SBM exchanges upto 1500 lines capacity into RSUs (Remote Switch Units) for enabling the extension of modern telecom facilities to rural areas.

(viii) BSNL has entered into an agreement with Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for providing Village Public Telephones (VPTs) facility to 66822 accessible, undisputed and undisturbed uncovered villages having population more then 100 as per census 1991 in the country.

(ix) In addition, USO(F) has also entered into agreement with some private operators for providing rural community phones and rural household direct exchange lines.

Network congestion in telephone

1675. SHRI PRAVEEN RASHTRAPAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned "TRAI slams BSNL over network congestion" as reported in the media;

(b) if so, whether BSNL has taken any action to check network congestion;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.